

## Happy Wanderers Santa Ynez 2021

Our June outing took members of the camping club north to the rolling hills of the Santa Ynez Valley. We travelled here to participate in the Santa Ynez Lodge 2640's Wine Country Jamboree. This year marked a restart of the event after a two-year absence due to Covid and a very steep increase in the rental costs of the previous venue. This jamboree has been their largest fundraiser going back almost thirty years.

The Simi crew consisted of five rigs. Paso Robles joined in with another six. Other lodges came up as well. Most arrived as early birds on Thursday morning. This new site, Larsen Meadows, is used for scout camping. It's a dry camp in a very rustic setting within the Los Padres National Forest. It took some clever parking techniques to get comfortably level. Stacking up the Lego block levelers and digging wheels down into the dirt were the preferred methods.

The temperature stayed in the mid 80's for the daytime. We were cooled by a constant breeze which really helped us stay comfortable. Nights were chilly, dropping down to the high 40's.

The party opened Friday morning with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer. Things got rolling with Kid's Bingo in the morning, followed by burgers and dogs for lunch and the opening of the mobile bar trailer for much needed refreshments. Adult Bingo and Pull Tabs went on throughout the afternoon. For dinner, we were treated to delicious barbequed Top Block Sirloin prepared by a master griller in the Valley. It was so tender you could cut it with a fork! Served with all the fixins. It was an early evening for most everyone.

Saturday dawned warm and most campers were up early visiting. Of course, the traditional Bloody Mary and Mimosas were poured liberally. Our hosts served a wonderful breakfast, eggs, biscuits and gravy with sides. Mid-morning brought out a small craft fair that showcased items created by some of the lodge members. Lunch again along with complementary wine tasting furnished by the local Gainey Vineyards. Very nice! Kids got to do crafts including painting wooden pigs and birdhouses. We also participated in the local American Legion Honor Guard presentation of an American flag to the lodge. The fun continued with Pig Races, Bingo, and a hilarious grape stomping contest mastered by two Simi members. A silent auction of fine gifts including a vacation in Cabo brought out serious bidding. Another great dinner, barbequed lemon chicken and sides filled everyone. As a bonus we enjoyed the band known as "The T-Bone Ramblers", serenading us for dinner and later spirited dancing. Festivities quieted down, and most called it a day. However, four hearty Elks soldiered on and celebrated the "11 O'Clock Toast" ....to our absent members.

Sunday morning brought another great breakfast. Afterwards it was moving time. We cleaned up, packed up and said our goodbyes to friends old and new.

Next year promises to be bigger and better. We look forward to a larger group from Simi and a great time with our northern lodge family. A big THANK YOU! to ER Stefan Ornelaz and his wife, Leading Knight Nicole and their great crew of tireless volunteers for bringing back this event and making us feel very welcome.

Please check out Dave Berthiaume's great photos of this event on our website:

[www.happywanderers.net](http://www.happywanderers.net)

Russ Moon, Happy Wanderers Bugle Correspondent.